

K-12 Enrollment Trends in Virginia During the 2020s

Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee, Education Subcommittee

February 1, 2024

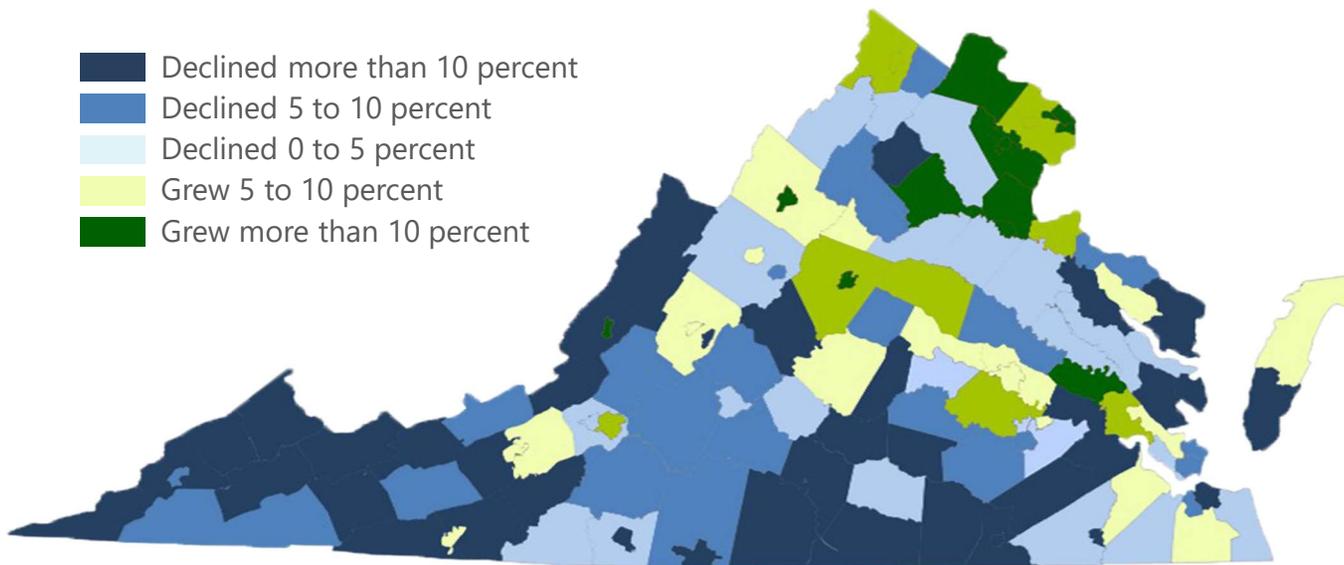
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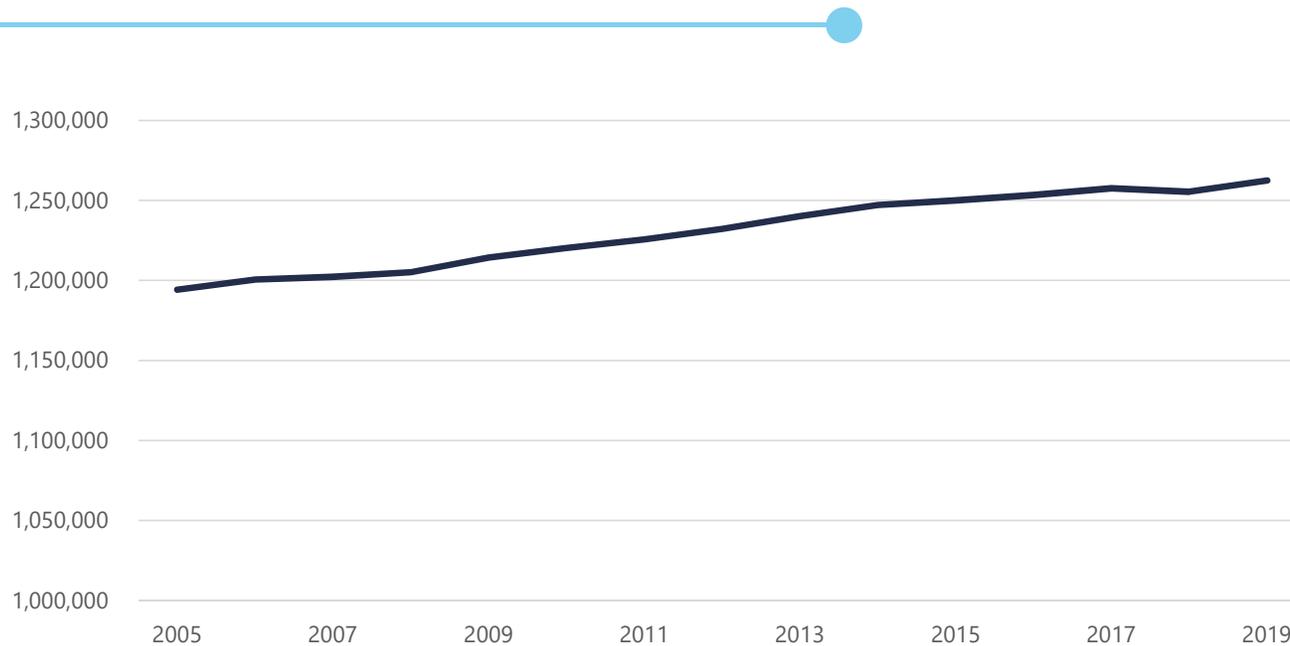
During the 2010s, enrollment growth was concentrated in Virginia's largest divisions



Change in Public School K-12 Enrollment, 2010 to 2019

- Virginia's school-age population and public K-12 enrollment growth during the 2010s was driven almost entirely by Northern Virginia
- Enrollment in 69 of Virginia's 95 counties declined

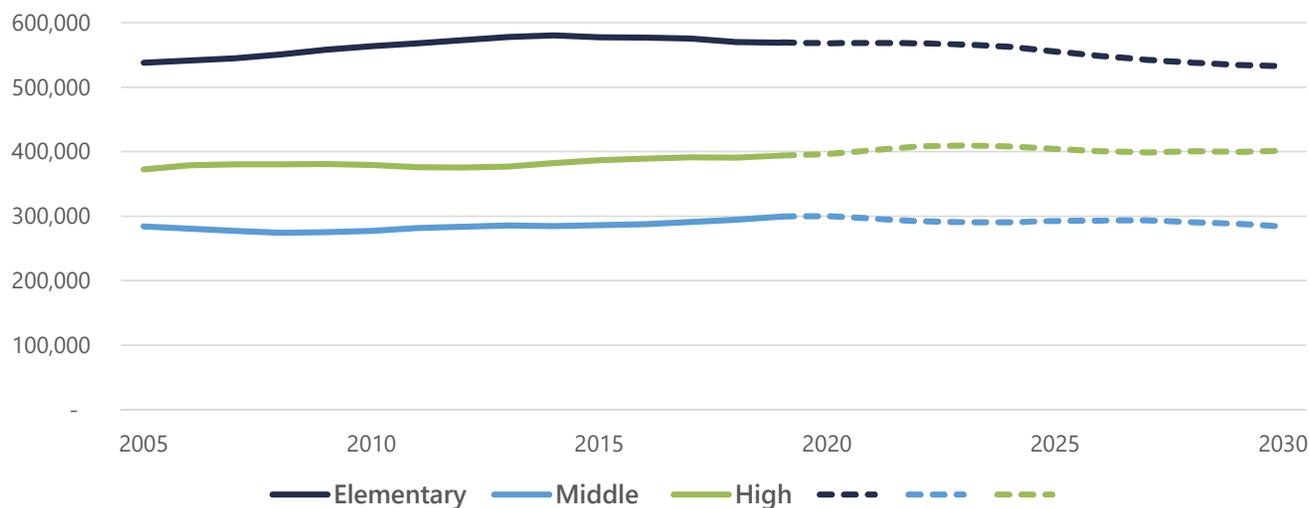
Virginia's K-12 enrollment grew steadily during the 2010s



Virginia Public School Enrollment (K-12)

- Both Virginia's school-age population and public K-12 student enrollment grew every year between 1984 and 2018
- Public K-12 student enrollment was still growing before pandemic

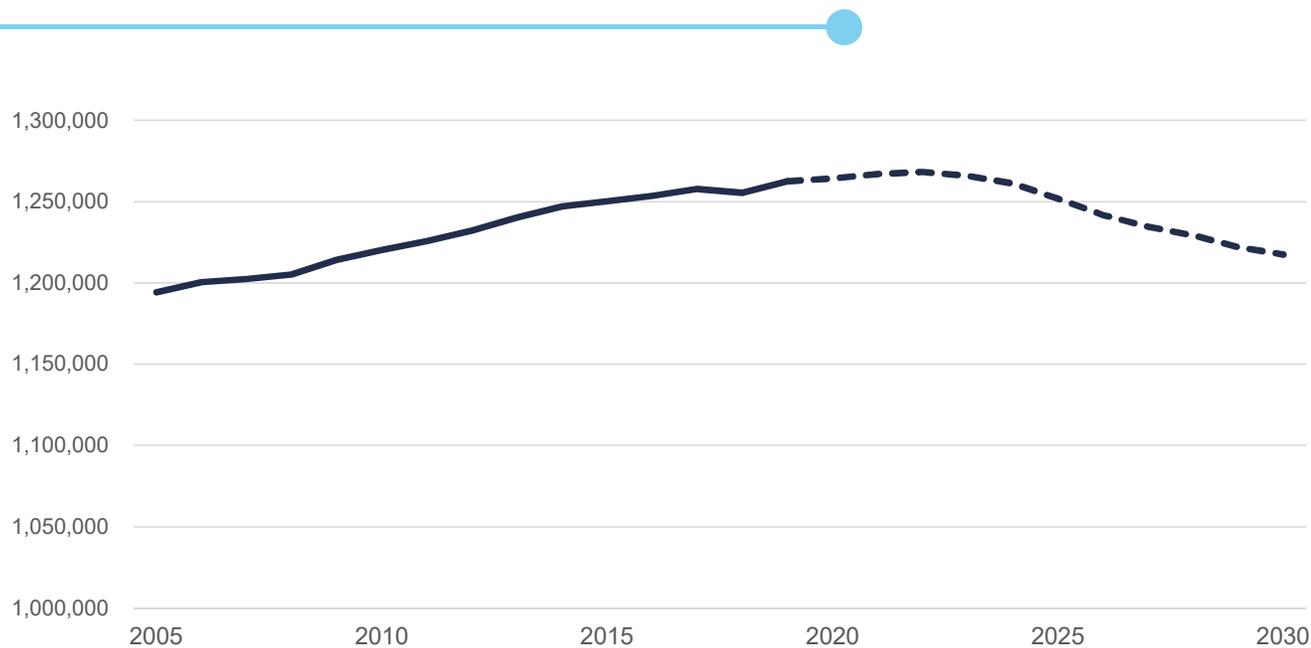
During the 2020s, enrollment decline was expected to spread to Virginia's upper grades



Virginia Public School Projections (K-12)

- By the mid-2010s, Virginia's elementary school enrollment was already shrinking
- During the 2020s, the smaller K-12 student cohorts were expected to progress to the upper grades.

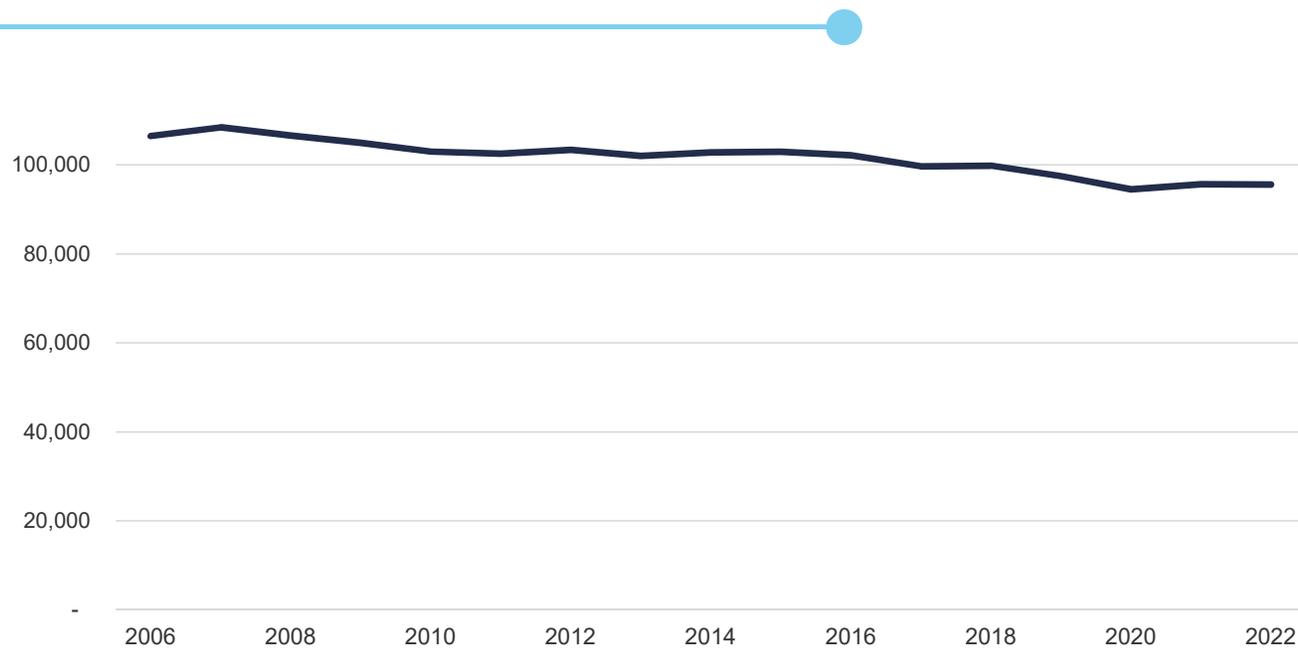
Prior to Covid-19, K-12 enrollment was on course to decline in the 2020s



Virginia Public School Projections (K-12)

- In 2019, Virginia public schools were on course to lose close to 50,000 students during 2020s
- During the 2020s, Virginia's school-age population was expected to decline in number

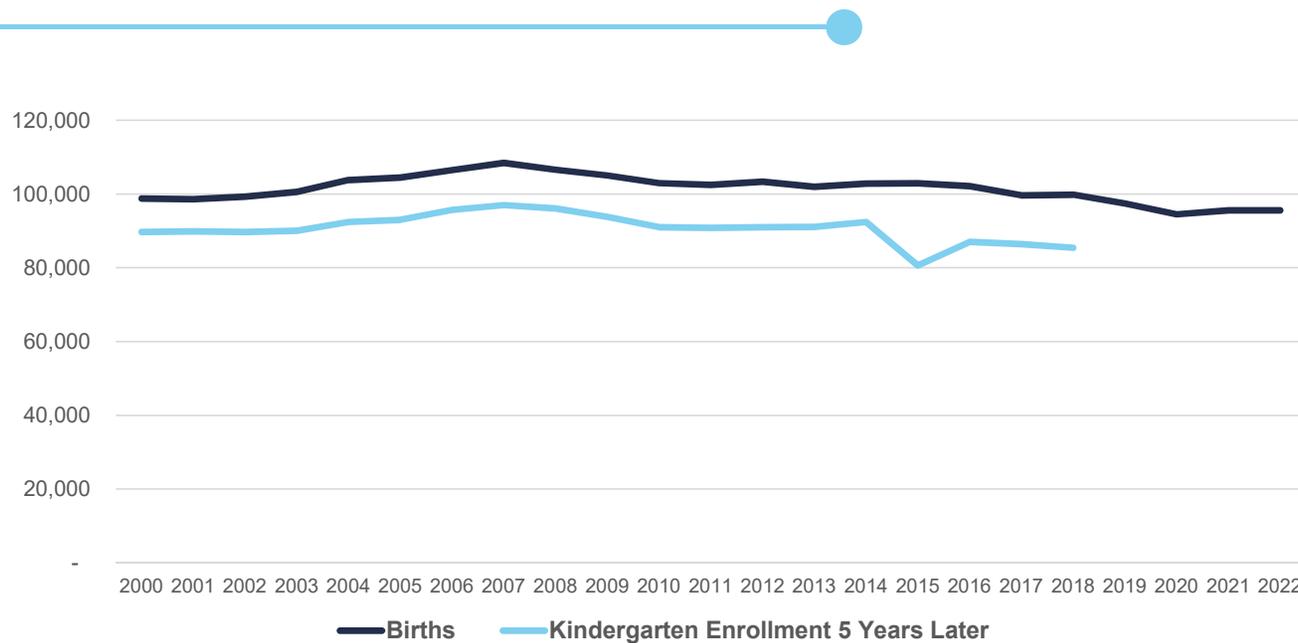
Births have fallen nearly every year since 2007



Virginia Annual Births

- Annual births have declined by 11 percent in Virginia since 2007
- The decline in births since 2007 is the primary reason for the projected decline in Virginia's K-12 enrollment

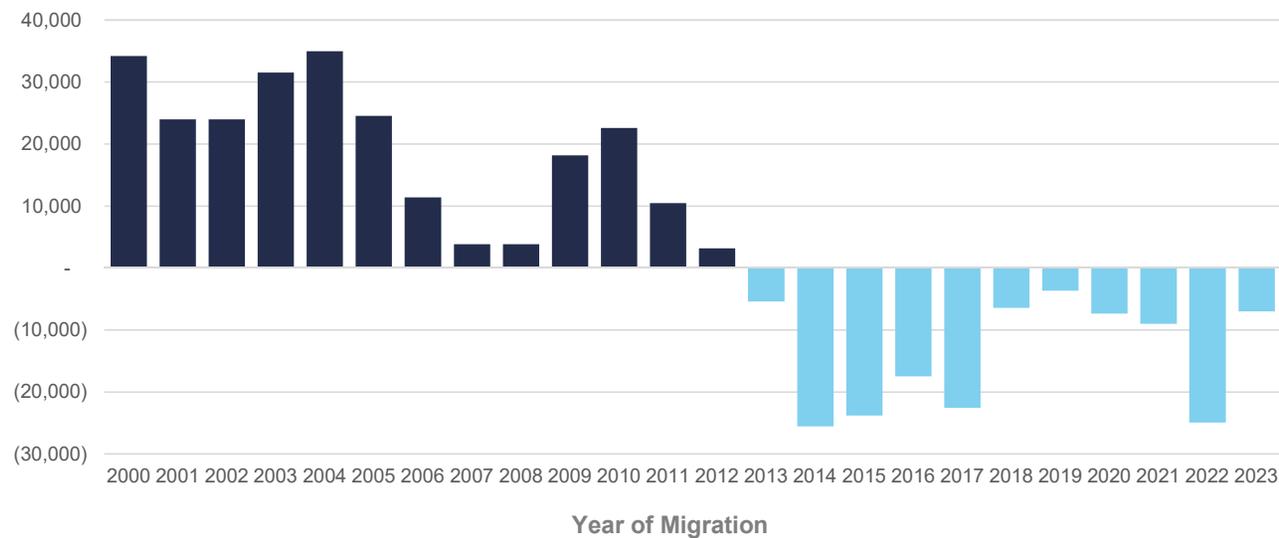
Birth rates are highly predictive of future school enrollments in Virginia



Births and Kindergarten Enrollment

- Fewer births has meant fewer kindergartners in Virginia
- Five years after births peaked in Virginia in 2007, kindergarten class sizes began declining

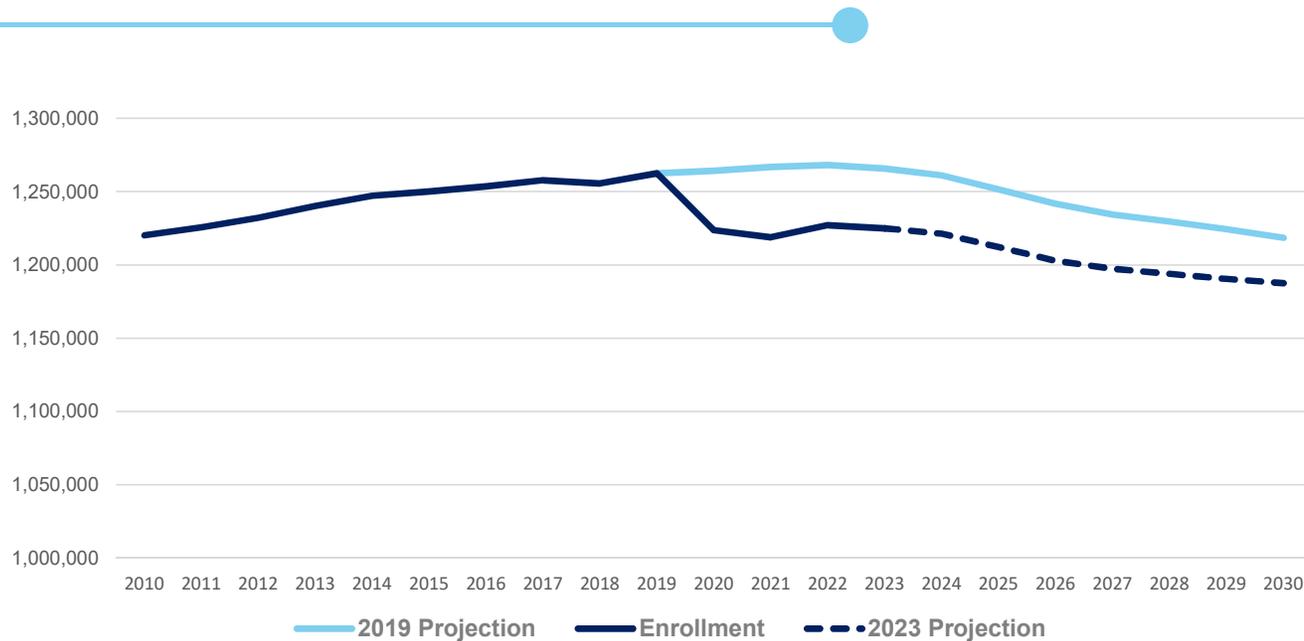
The shift to out-migration has slowed Virginia's population growth



Virginia Net Domestic Migration

- Each year since 2013, more people have moved out of Virginia to other states than into Virginia
- The largest shift to out-migration in Virginia was among children and their parents

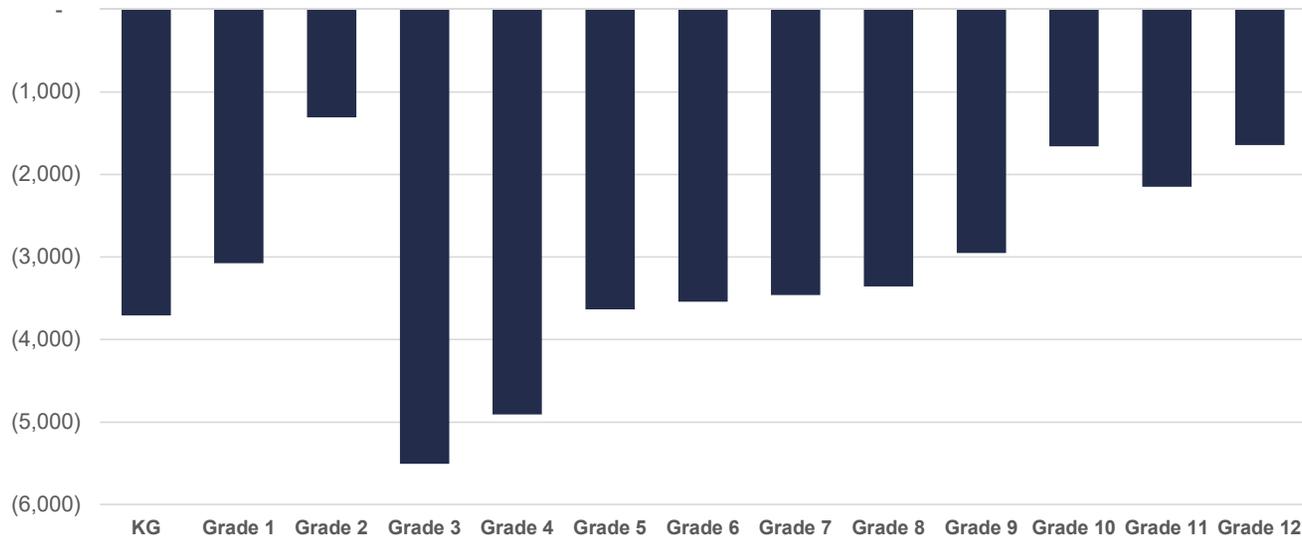
Virginia's public school enrollment has not fully recovered from the pandemic



Virginia K-12 Public School Enrollment

- Virginia's public schools in 2023 had over 40,000 fewer students than projected in 2019
- Pre-pandemic trends are expected to cause Virginia's public school enrollment to continue to decline over the next decade

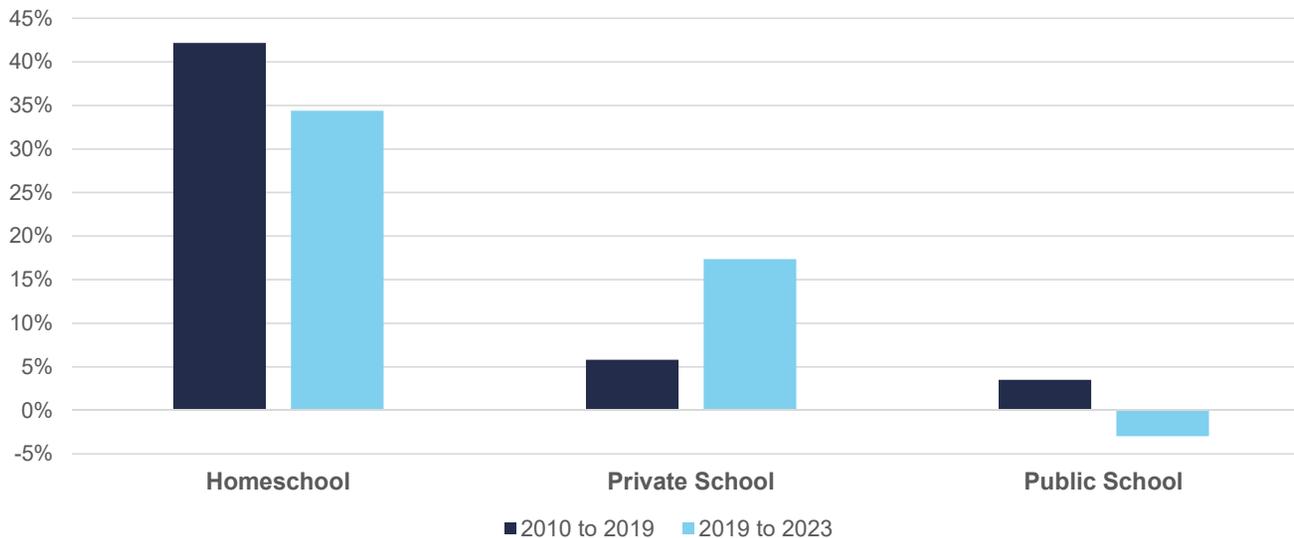
Thousands of students are still missing from Virginia's public schools



Expected vs Actual Public School Enrollment (2023)

- Between 2022 and 2023, fewer than 1,000 of students who left Virginia's public schools during the pandemic returned
- The thousands of missing kindergartners and 1st graders in 2023 suggest a permanent increase in the share of children being educated privately

The pandemic accelerated growth in Virginia's private K-12 education

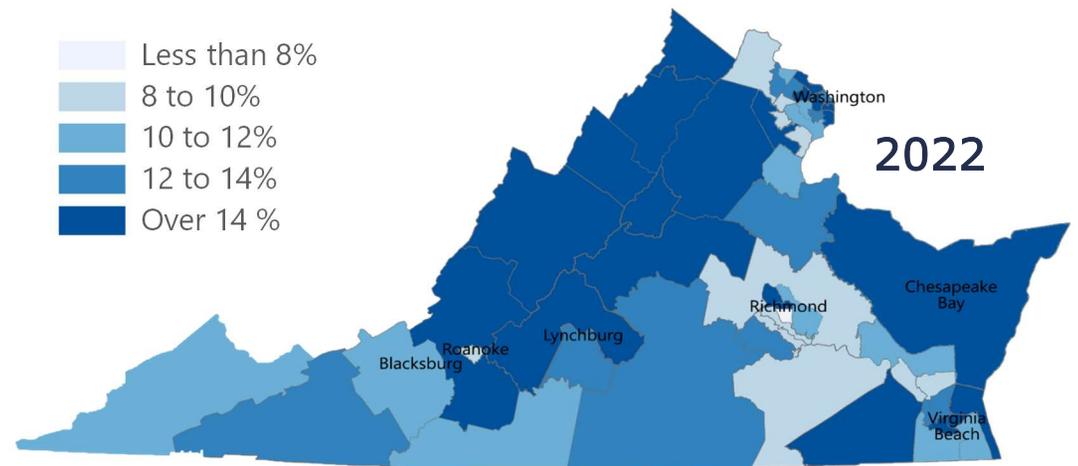
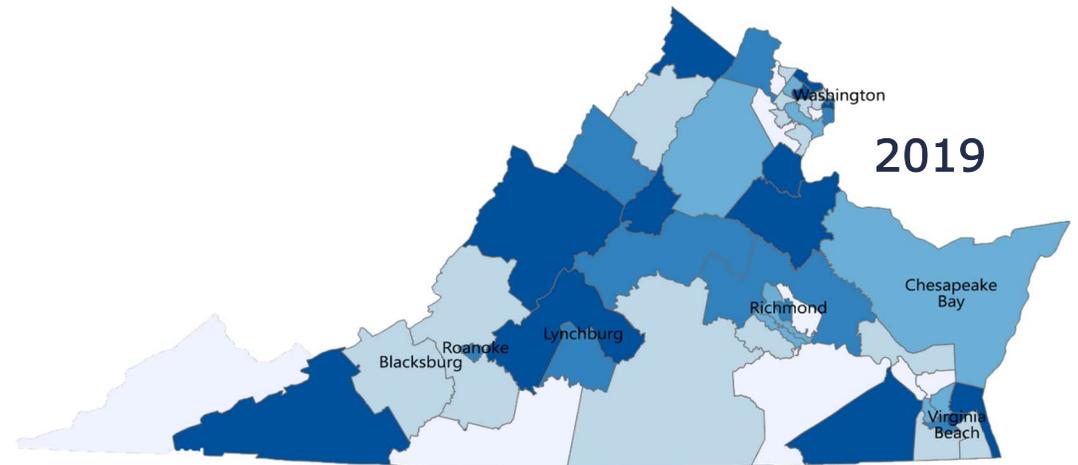


Change in K-12 Enrollment since 2010

- Both private and home school enrollment were already growing relatively quickly before 2020
- Enrollment in private schools continued to grow in 2023

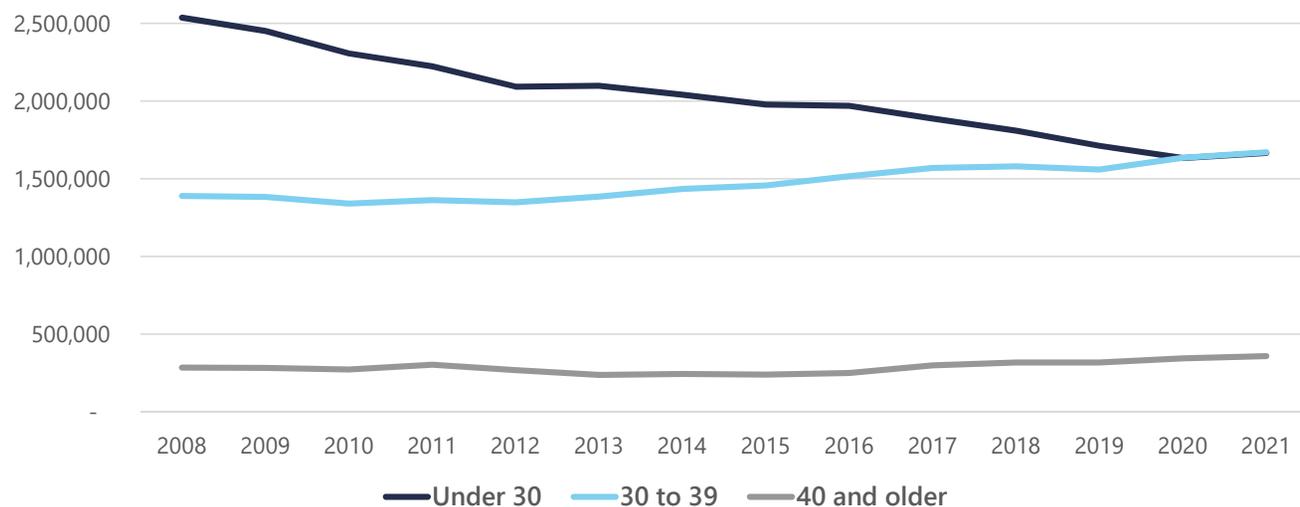
The share of K-12 students educated privately has risen across Virginia since 2019

- The share of children educated privately was higher in nearly every part of Virginia in 2022 than before the pandemic.
- In portions of Virginia, 20 to 25 percent of children are now educated privately.



Private K-12 Enrollment in 2019 and 2022 Census American Community Survey

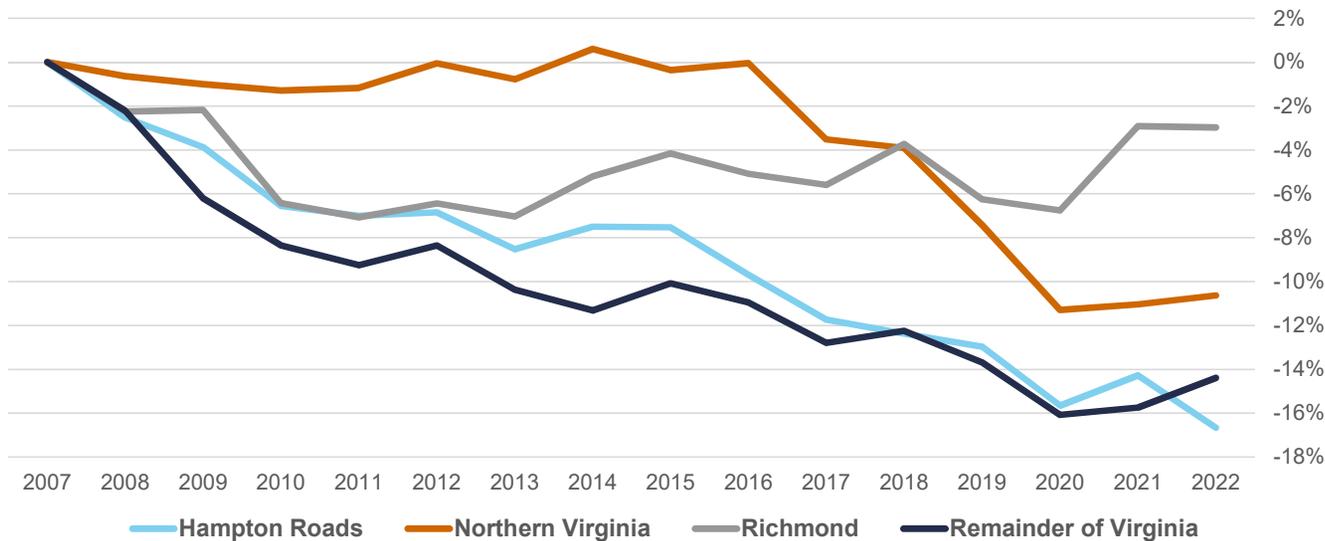
Women are waiting longer to start families and are having fewer children



U.S. Annual Births by Mother's Age, CDC Birth Data

- Two-thirds of the decline in births nationally since 2007 has been among mothers 20 and younger
- Some of the decline in births is from women delaying motherhood

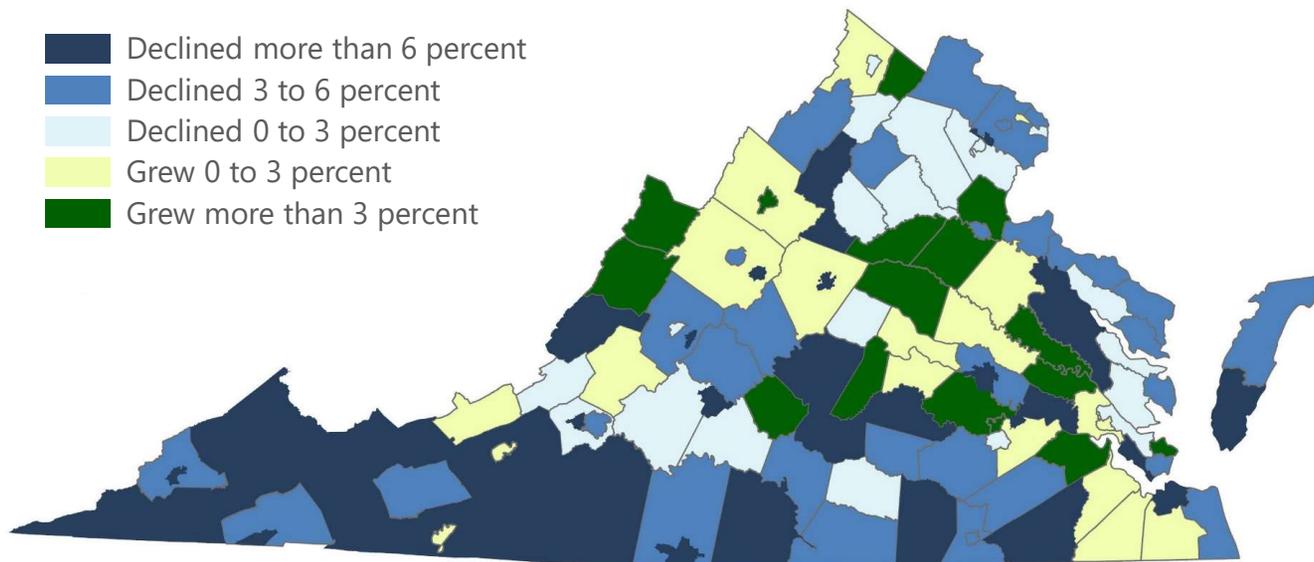
Births have not declined evenly throughout Virginia



Change in Births by Region since 2007

- The initial decline in births in rural counties caused their student enrollments to fall first
- Since the mid-2010s, births have declined sharply in Northern Virginia, which is now resulting in lower student enrollment

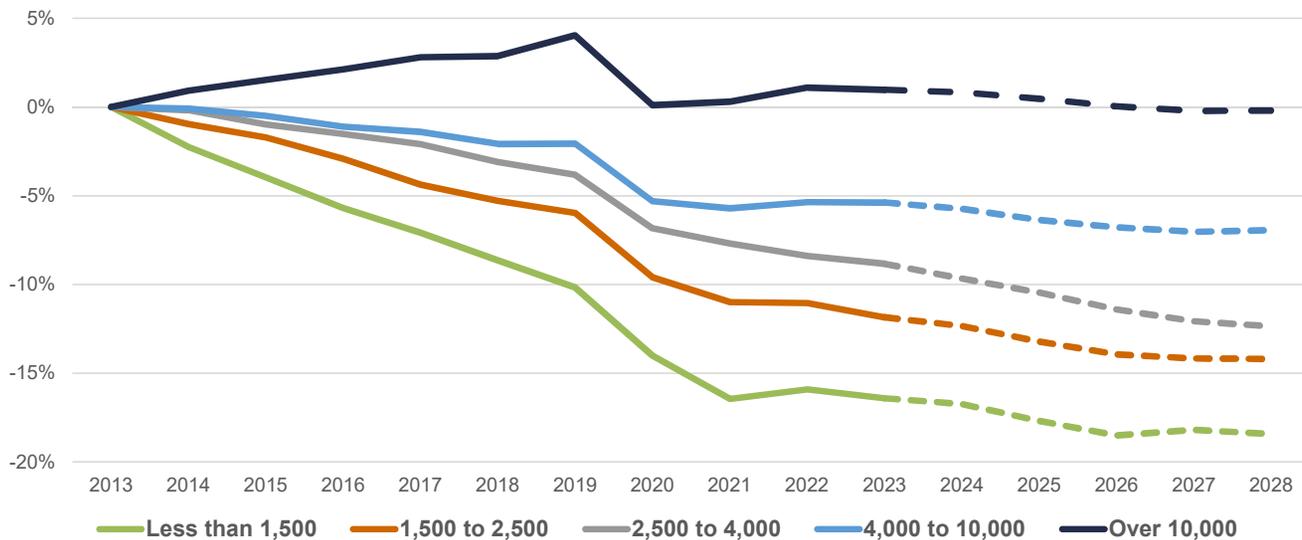
Birth trends will cause the school-age population to shrink during the 2020s



Projected Student Enrollment Change, 2023 to 2028

- Fewer births will mean widespread enrollment decline during the 2020s
- Enrollment will still increase in some divisions during the 2020s, often in those that declined during the 2010s

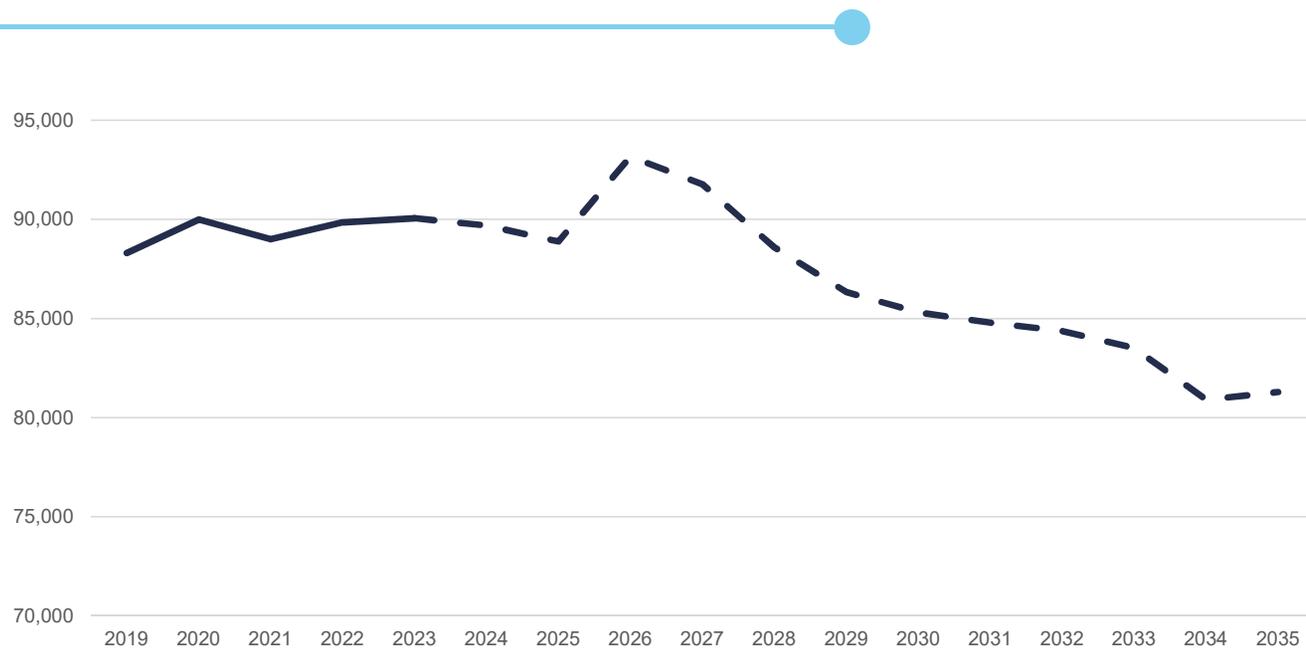
Enrollment trends during the 2020s are expected to be different from the 2010s



Change in Enrollment Since 2013 by Division Size

- Enrollment is expected to decline in most divisions, regardless of the size
- During the 2020s, enrollment trends in most large and small divisions will be more similar to each other than in recent decades

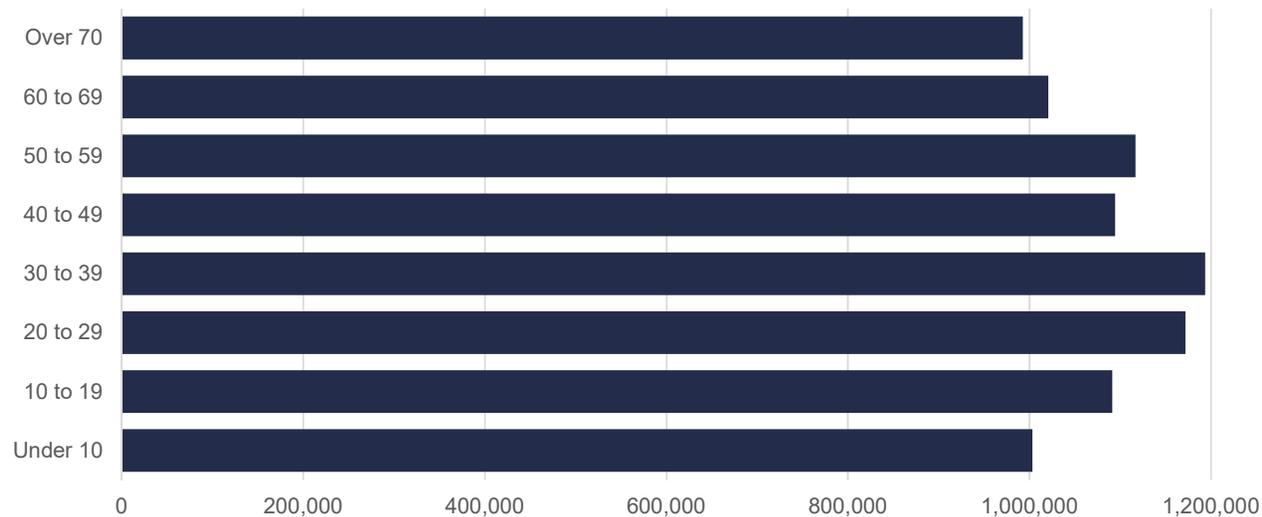
The number of Virginia high school graduates will begin to decline within a few years



Virginia Public High School Graduates

- The smaller student cohorts will eventually result in smaller graduating classes from Virginia's high schools
- A steady decline in the number of 18 year olds in Virginia will affect its colleges and workforce

Virginia's age distribution is growing increasingly unbalanced



Virginia Population by Age in 2022

- The number of Virginians turning 65 is close to the number turning 18, tightening the labor supply.
- Two decades of falling birth rates means there are 15 percent fewer Virginians under age 10 than in their 30s.

Key points

1

Most of the 40,000 K-12 students who left Virginia's public schools during the pandemic are unlikely to return.

2

Pre-pandemic demographic trends will cause public K-12 enrollment to steadily decline for the foreseeable future.

3

The number of high school graduates will begin to shrink after the mid-2020s, affecting Virginia's colleges and the workforce over the long term.

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